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October 16, 2008

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Chief Financial OfficerPhil Isenberg, Chair
Delta Vision Blue Ribbon Task Force
650 Capitol Mall
Sacramento, CA 95814**Re: Comments on Fifth Draft Delta Vision Strategic Plan**

Dear Chairman Isenberg:

The Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District (SRCSD) appreciates the opportunity to offer comments on the October 9, 2008, Delta Vision Strategic Plan, Fifth Draft (Strategic Plan). As stakeholders and environmental stewards, SRCSD is actively involved in the protection of the Delta ecosystem and water supplies derived from the Delta and support the goal of the Delta Vision to ensure the long-term sustainability of the Delta and its ecosystem.

As you are aware, SRCSD has provided detailed comments on the previous four versions of the Strategic Plan and is providing additional comments on this fifth draft. Although, we must state up front, it has been difficult to review such a lengthy document on such a short turn around (less than 5 business days since it was released). As a result, SRCSD will likely have additional detailed comments as this Strategic Plan moves forward for review by the Delta Vision Committee. As mentioned in our September 2, 2008, comment letter, the fourth version, as well as this fifth version of the Strategic Plan is a vast improvement over the previous two versions. However, SRCSD still has overarching concerns with some of the goals and strategies included in this latest draft. SRCSD's previous comments, for the most part, are also relevant to the current fifth draft. Rather than repeating what has previously been provided to you, we hereby fully incorporate the comments made in our prior letters by reference and are reiterating our key concerns below.

SRCSD Key Concerns

SRCSD recognizes the Delta is in peril and solutions must be implemented to protect its ecosystem and ensure its sustainability. Over the last several months SRCSD has focused its comments on five key concerns that must be addressed as solutions are developed to protect the Delta.

- **Stakeholder Involvement and Governance** - All processes must provide greater involvement of In-Delta Central Valley Stakeholders, *including clean water agencies* such as SRCSD. Any new governance structure should not supersede the authority of the State and Regional Water Boards.

- **Costs Must Be Allocated in Direct Proportion to Benefits Received** - Any solutions related to Delta water supply and reliability must not re-direct impacts and related costs to the Sacramento Region or upstream water users.
- **Objective Scientific Approaches to Identify Relevant and Cost Effective Solutions** - Strategies to protect the ecosystem must result in measureable benefits, and scientific linkages between "cause-and-effect" hypotheses must be sufficiently demonstrated.
- **Ecosystem Health and Water Quality** – SRCSD believes that any changes to the operation or structure of the Delta must be carefully evaluated to ensure that the goals of attaining a healthy ecosystem and providing a reliable water supply are actually equal and result in the ecosystem that is desired.
- **Performance Measures** – It is important to include narrative performance measures so progress can be measured and strategies modified, as necessary. However, the Strategic Plan must not include numeric targets, as the science and studies should be done first. The Strategic Plan should focus on outcomes with a narrative objective for the performance measure.

With the above key concerns in mind, as well as our previous comments submitted, SRCSD has the following comments specific to the Fifth Staff Draft of the Strategic Plan ("Fifth Draft"):

Action Items 3.5.1 – and Strategy 3.5.1 - Improve water quality to meet drinking water, agriculture and ecosystem long-term goals.

SRCSD requests that the language in this strategy be modified to be consistent with California Water Code and remove the reference to "fully protected" and replace it with "reasonable protection of beneficial uses". Specifically, SRCSD suggests the following modifications as shown in strike-out and underline below.

Immediately re-evaluate wastewater treatment plant discharges into Delta waterways and upstream rivers and set discharge requirements at levels that ensure reasonable protection of beneficial uses ~~are fully protective of human health and ecosystem needs~~. This process should involve ~~formal~~ consultation with the California Department of Public Health.

Goal 7: Establish a new governance structure with the authority, responsibility, accountability, science support and secure funding to achieve these goals.

SRCSD has extensively commented on the proposed governance structure and has indicated that it strenuously objects to any effort to create a new governmental agency or "council" with superior or even appellate review authority over the water quality functions of the State and Regional Boards. The notion that the newly-created Council should have superlative authority over all other state and local agencies is troubling from a number of respects. First, it would undercut the Porter-Cologne Act, as well as more than 30 years of experience and water quality expertise developed by the State and Regional Water Boards. There is nothing in the Fifth Draft of the Strategic Plan that suggests the Council will have the necessary staff and attendant expertise in water quality matters to superimpose

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its political will. Second, the people of the Greater Sacramento Region deserve better than to have an unelected body of five or seven individuals, all of whom are likely to have no obligation to the people or issues of Sacramento, determine local and regional land use and water quality-related matters.

We hope the Task Force will consider the above comments as you develop the final draft of the Delta Strategic Plan. As always, SRCSD stands ready to participate in the process to investigate and find solutions for the Delta. We encourage you to help establish an open process that we and other stakeholders can participate in and add value to the process.

Sincerely,



Wendell Kido
District Manager

cc: Delta Vision Blue Ribbon Task Force Members
Delta Vision Committee Members
State Water Resources Control Board Members
Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board Members
Lester Snow, Department of Water Resources
Debbie Webster, Executive Officer, Central Valley Clean Water Agencies
Mary K. Snyder, District Engineer, SRCSD
Terrie Mitchell, Legislative and Regulatory Affairs Manager, SRCSD
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